

1998 CROP REVIEW

The combined value of production for small grain, hay, and late season row crops (excluding sugar beets) produced in 1998 totaled \$1.31 billion, down 10 percent from the comparable value of \$1.46 billion for the 1997 crops. Colorado producers had a larger output in 1998 than they did in 1997 for corn grain and silage, sorghum grain, winter and spring wheat, oats, alfalfa hay, dry beans, sunflowers and potatoes. Production was below the previous year for sorghum silage, barley, other hay, and sugar beets.

All hay was the state's leading crop in terms of value with total value of production at \$440.49 million, representing nearly 33 percent of the total value from all crops. The 1998 crop of 4.60 million tons was 3 percent below the 4.74 million tons produced in 1997. The 1998 alfalfa crop was valued at \$318.1 million, representing 72 percent of the all hay value. The other hay crop was valued at \$122.4 million, 21 percent below a year earlier. Hay producers harvested fewer acres than the previous year but realized higher per acre yields while all hay prices averaged less than they did the previous year.

The 1998 corn crop had a value of \$378.6 million and was the second leading crop produced in the state in terms of value of production. Corn for grain contributed \$325.8 million or 25 percent of the total value of all field crops. The 1998 crop of 155.15 million bushels was 8 percent larger than the 1997 crop of 143.08 million bushels. Producers harvested 1,070,000 acres for grain in 1998, up 9 percent from the previous year. The average yield of 145 bushels per acre was 1 bushel under the 1997 average. Corn silage production was up 7 percent from 1997 to 2.40 million tons. Producers harvested the same number of acres as the previous year but averaged higher per acre yields.

The 103.7 million bushels of all wheat produced in 1998 was valued at just under \$269 million, keeping it ranked third in terms of value of production. The value declined 6 percent from \$285.6 million a year earlier. Winter wheat production, at 99.45 million bushels from 2.55 million acres harvested, was 15 percent higher than the 1997 crop. The average yield of 39.0 bushels per acre was equal to the record high first set in 1983 and reached again in 1985. Spring wheat production increased 15 percent as producers harvested 20 percent more acres but experienced a 3 bushel decline in the average yield. Prices for the 1998 crop are expected to average well below the previous year.

The value of production of all potatoes is expected to drop to a total of \$106.9 million for the 1998 crop, down 15 percent from \$126.2 million received from the 1997 crop. All potato production was higher than the previous year, but lower prices were more than offsetting. Fall potato

production totaled 25.36 million cwt in 1998, up 1 percent from the 1997 crop. The 1998 summer potato crop of 2.59 million cwt was just slightly above the 1997 as a slightly higher per acre yield offset 100 fewer acres harvested.

Dry bean production increased 26 percent from a year earlier to 2.87 million cwt but lower prices for the 1998 crop were partially offsetting, resulting in a 12 percent increase in total value to \$47.9 million. While no value has yet been determined for the 1998 crop of sugar beets, the 1.30 million tons of beets produced was just slightly below the 1997 output. The 1998 average yield of 22.7 tons per acre was 3.0 tons per acre higher than the 1997 average of 19.7 tons per acre.

Barley production declined 2 percent from 1997 to 9.43 million bushels in 1998 as a new record high yield of 115.0 bushels per acre more than offset a 7,000 acre decline in the acreage harvested. The 1998 crop value of \$27.3 million was down 5 percent from \$28.6 million for the 1997 crop. Sorghum for grain production totaled 10.5 million bushels in 1998, up 76 percent from the 6.00 million bushels produced in 1997. The harvested area increased 23 percent to 185,000 acres and a new record high average yield of 57.0 bushels per acre was 17 bushels above the previous year and 6.0 bushels above the previous record high set in 1996. The 1998 oats production increased 3 percent from the previous year to 1.75 million bushels. Producers harvested the same number of acres as they did the previous year, but per acre yields averaged 2.0 bushels above the 1997 average.

The 1998 output of all sunflowers was valued at \$20.3 million compared with \$10.4 million for the 1997 crop. Sunflower production, at 173.65 million pounds, more than doubled the 1997 crop. Of this total, 124.20 million pounds were from oil varieties and 49.45 million pounds were from non-oil varieties. Growers harvested 92,000 acres of oil varieties, an increase of 45,000 acres from 1997. The acreage of non-oil varieties increased 10,000 acres to 43,000 acres. Per acre yields also averaged higher than the previous year.

Winter wheat seedings for the 1999 crop, at 2.60 million acres, were down 5 percent from the 2.75 million acres seeded for the 1998 crop. Planting began on schedule in most areas with generally favorable moisture supplies for germination and emergence. Winter moisture was limited in most areas but was generally sufficient to maintain favorable prospects. Dry top soils in several areas raised concern for the crop during February and March but early April snow/rain improved prospects. As of May 1, producers were expecting good yields for the 1999 crop.